

Visual & Performing Arts— Expressions of Our Humanity

The art displayed and performed in the City expresses the unique characteristics of its people.

The Arts as a Catalyst for Civic Involvement

The ties that bind people together into a true community are made through their interactions at all levels of life. Among the many activities that bring people together to create opportunities for this type of interaction, the enjoyment of the visual and performing arts almost always assures mutually positive experiences. Throughout history culture and civic pride have held close ties with the involvement of the community in the visual and performing arts. The City of Fairfax is no exception to this relationship, supporting a wide variety of activities, groups and facilities oriented towards the arts. In fact, the City's deep involvement in the arts has caused it to become recognized as a hub for the arts in the Northern Virginia area.

Resources for the Arts

The City has long supported the arts through the activities of the Commission on the Arts, the annual Spotlight on the Arts events, the Fairfax Art League, the City Band, and numerous other programs and groups. In addition, George Mason University has provided a growing base of resources for the arts over the past 30 years. The recent addition of the Fairfax High School Academy serves as a magnet program for communications and the arts for the Fairfax County Public Schools system.

Resources for the arts include the following organizations, activities and arts-related events in the City of Fairfax:

- The Commission on the Arts supports many activities, events and groups through its grant program available to school arts programs and local arts organizations. In addition, the Commission supports Spotlight on the Arts, the Old Town Hall Performance Series and the activities of George Mason University's Center for the Arts.
- Since 1986 the annual Spotlight on the Arts events have included a wide variety of exhibits and performances. Now including approximately 75 performances, activities and special events by more than 25 artists and art organiza-

tions, Spotlight on the Arts offers exhibits of paintings, drawings and sculpture, dramatic choral and dance productions; and orchestral, swing, jazz and other instrumental music.

- The Fairfax Art League has also actively operated exhibits in the City, serving resident artists as a local guild and serving the residents of the City to make art available in the public buildings of the City. The City provides exhibit space on the second floor of Old Town Hall, while the Fairfax Art League provides art works for exhibition and sale at City Hall.
- The Summer Concert Series, held at the Veterans Amphitheater on City Hall grounds, offers musical performances by groups such as the City of Fairfax Band, the Alte Kameraden German Band, the Fairfax Saxophone Quartet, the Rebel Run Dixieland Band and the Fairfax Swing Band.
- Opportunities involving the arts in the City of Fairfax are not limited to performing and watching. City residents also have a wide variety of opportunities for expanding personal skills and abilities in the arts. Courses in music, dance, theater, painting and sculpture are available through the City's recreation program, through local arts organizations, as well as through George Mason University and private lessons.

The Arts in Community Development

The City has long recognized the value of its basic resources for the visual and performing arts and their value for promoting civic pride, action and stature. The City has not, however, taken advantage of the opportunities to promote its arts through its community development projects and activities. The anticipated downtown redevelopment project and the Lee Highway Corridor revitalization project offer opportunities to incorporate the arts of the City into its building lobbies, streetscapes and other public and semi-public areas. Just as the City has incorporated brick sidewalks, gaslights and street trees into the fabric of Old Town Fairfax, so might the City

reinforce its tradition of involvement in the arts by locating carefully chosen works of art at visual focal points throughout the City. Just as the City has told the stories of its rich history of 18th and 19th century life in Virginia, so might it present those stories in a dramatic setting or in song to entertain its residents and tourists.

Visual & Performing Arts— Goal, Objective & Strategies

Goal: Promote the integration of the visual and performing arts into the built community as a means of promoting civic involvement, civic pride and civic stature.

Objective VP-1 Integrate the City's visual and performing arts into its community development program.

Strategies

VP-1.1 Reinforce existing and future development projects with the introduction of visual artwork in public and semi-public areas.

The City should identify natural visual focal points that exist throughout the City and begin an ongoing project to place at those locations artworks appropriate to the traditions of City of Fairfax.

VP-1.2 Assure continuing locations for local musical and dramatic productions for residents and visitors.

The City should plan and promote facilities that could accommodate musical and dramatic performances. A large indoor theater or amphitheater should be available to accommodate large citywide groups, while smaller outdoor theaters of various sizes should be provided in several locations around the City for neighborhood-level gatherings. In addition, the City should encourage the establishment of a privately owned and managed dinner theater for on-going dramatic and musical theater productions.

